776 idea of a large and supreme being, which in their language they call ohott-at (others pronounce it hojot-taj) which means 'great spirit,' but they do not worship it. Some of them appear to fear a sort of ghost which goes about at night and harms people and which they call onnexilele; others seem to indulge in a certain superstitious worship of a mysterious being which they call taj-juat, which means 'hidden one,' but without temple or particular place or determined time to render it their adoration. I only know that at the time of the new 791 moon, some of the Indians commonly get together to sing and dance, 776 and the sorcerers, as they call them, trick them by getting someone to dress up and play the part of taj-juat who, appearing out of the forest strangely garbed and speaking in a feigned tone of voice, frightens the spectators, to whom he predicts future times and events."

881 "But if the Matacos can be said to have no religion, this does not mean that they have no superstitious beliefs. For example, when a girl reaches puberty, she must remain withdrawn for a [604] certain time in a corner of her hut, covered with branches or any other thing, and neither speak to anyone nor eat meat or fish. And while she is thus withdrawn and cut off from the others, one of the village's ceremony masters must be in front of the hut playing the pimpin. When a 846 woman gives birth to a child she must remain lying down for a few days, and the husband must refrain from doing any work or indulging in any occupation for a long time. On occasion a woman has been surprised dancing round a bonfire into which she had thrown her dead child."

756 "Sorcerers also are not lacking among them, these, of course, being the most cunning, and the most feared and respected members of the community, who also play the part of medicasters and priests. In order to be accepted as one of those who follow so important and useful a profession it is enough if one wants to and feels strongly inspired; but first it is necessary that the candidate separate himself for a few days from the rest of the people and go off into the forest, fasting rigorously and going about day and night like a madman in no particular direction, returning then and appearing before the others pale, dirty, emaciated and with frightened eyes like one possessed. From that time on he is recognized as a privileged being who has had secret dealings with "the hidden one" and is possessed of a supernatural power which ● [753] enables him to undo any evil bewitchment and eliminate diseases from the sick, it being axiomatic amongst them that nobody sickens or dies from purely natural causes.

It seems to me that some philosophers, among them, Humboldt in his Cosmos, have pointed out this same fact and have given it a name which I cannot now recall.

It is very difficult to get any information from the Indians regarding their beliefs: they, in spite of having a deep disregard and scorn for the mysteries of the Christian faith, do all they can to avoid being ridiculed, threatened and catecized by their presumptious and intolerant enemies.

Faustino, a Christian and a refugee from amongst them, when questioned by me regarding any of their religious practices, would answer: "I do not know, sir -- the Indians are very distrustful."

The following which I am about to recount I gathered directly from some of them after having been successful in inspiring them with confidence by talking with them, giving them presents, being very friendly and having close acquaintance with them and by letting them see that I had a high regard for their beliefs.

Among the Matacos the spirits are called a'hót, and among the Vilelas, cokss.

These spirits live underground but at nighttime they come up out of the earth and wander about near men's houses; they also enter the bodies of persons and usually cause them to become diseased. The a'hót ride upon the wind, accompany storms (or are indeed the very storms themselves) and dance around the villages, huts and persons whom they wish to injure. The most terrible a'hót is smallpox, against which the witchdoctors are absolutely powerless. So terrified are the Indians of this a'hót that when it appears in a hauet-éi (village) they all abandon it as fast as they can, usually setting fire to it and abandoning the sick there. In spite of this [199] smallpox wreaks havoc among them, mostly, I believe, because of not taking the proper precautions (which is impossible, their houses and clothing being what they are) rather than because of lack of domestic and personal cleanliness which, in so far as I have been able to observe, is quite adequate. Practically all cases of smallpox prove fatal, and that is why one sees so few Indians marked by the disease.

Every man has a soul which, after he has died, goes down into the earth to join its companions, amongst whom he enjoys

C M 763 775 554 764 550

man promises to do this and his companions by way of reward do him even greater honor at his funeral, thus augmenting the departed one's power for good in the spirit world. Do we not do likewise when we implore those who die in the odor of sanctity to intercede in heaven for us in our pilgrimage through this vale of tears?

Sorrow points up the basic similarity in all men, and the harmony of the human character in actions and speech, hopes and doubts, is never manifested more clearly than when confronted with a grave.

Chapter XI

Doctors

M● C 755 753● [756]

In the Chaco there are both male and female doctors, but very few medicines; treatment being purely empirical because of the ignorance and superstition of those Indians. [209]

It is strange that the wild inhabitants of the Chaco have not discovered remedies, but that is the way it is, in part because of their lack of intelligence but mostly because of the superstition which grips them in all matters respecting disease and sickness.

They firmly believe that sickness is caused by an a hot's getting into a person, and therefore all efforts are bent in the direction of getting rid of it by the only means possible, that is by conjuring it out.

It follows logically from this that their doctors cannot be other than witch doctors or priests or what have you. Apart from this their very superstition is a consequence of each person's need to free himself of a present evil and his ignorance as to how to bring this about. That generous measure of wit native to man does service as a middle road between ignorance and superstition.

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Nevertheless they realize their lack of efficacious remedies and also the superiority of the whites in this matter, in whom they have great faith as healers; while the poorer and more

123
had been tormenting him for so long, and had extracted from his 755
body several pens and a pencil, under guise of which, they said, the a'hot had been harming him.

[211] The women seem to be extraordinarily able as mid- 844
wives. 759

With singular ability they wait for the critical moment of labor and then, raising and holding the mother-to-be they shake her and keep uttering their customary exorcisms until they are successful in their endeavors.

However, if one wishes to be in on an interesting spectacle 755
one must see an invalid getting the full treatment in a village.

One evening while I was camped near a tribe I became curious on hearing a great sound of voices and the repercussion of strong blows on the ground. As my relations with these Indians was of the very best I did not hesitate to go to see what was afoot. In the midst of the village, in a sort of central square, I saw a circle of black figures illuminated fitfully by the blaze of the fires; they were the squaws and men who were sitting on their heels smoking in silence. In the center of the circle, in a space of about eight meters, four robust men with ostrich feathers and timbrels at their ankles, wrists, waists and on their heads were running back and forth, with their hands raised, gesticulating wildly and rattling some gourds half filled with seeds which added to the noise. They ran about singing and howling, and one could see that they were panting and covered with sweat. They would straighten out their legs and pound the ground with the whole sole of their feet, and as they did this they would raise their voices in a mad, desperate way, with their arms on high, heads to one side and body curved over.

Alternately two of them would stop, crouch, move their heads rapidly from right to left and up and down, howl and blow and spit on the backs, legs, heads and mouths of two invalids who were seated in their midst.

The two sick men were suffering terribly from the a'hots which had entered their bodies in the form of rheumatic pains, and the [753]
witch doctors were attempting to drive them out with their infernal dance. This, it was understood, they would be unable to do until they managed, by means of their unbridled racing about and thumping, to tire and intimidate the a'hots who, with evil intent

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776 761 The second class of spirits are called *nahút*. They are the most feared because they are believed to cause death, the phenomenon most feared by primitive man. Being particularly death demons, the *nahút* are frequently called *nahút yil*. *Yil* is the Mataco word for death. Every death is due to a special *nahút yil*, and of course every mortal disease, or every disease which naturally ends in death unless the art of the medicine-man can prevent it. If one asks a Mataco Indian what a *nahút* is like, he will answer that it is a thin, shadow-like human figure; it is the double of the dead man. The *nahút* live in the earth, where the dead are interred, but they frequently leave this dwelling-place and fly through the air, approach the habitations of the living and inflict mortal disease upon them.

753 776 [755] Every grave disease is due to a special *nahút*. Thus for instance, the intermittent fever which attacks people during the cold season, is caused by a *nahút telâh*. The Mataco, however, are of opinion that it is possible for a medicine-man to cure the patient by incantations in four or five days. The worst *nahút* of all is the small-pox, *otoahtyé*, a disease which has caused terrible ravages among the Mataco at different periods. The art of the medicine-man is powerless against this dreadful demon. Therefore, when an epidemic of small-pox breaks out in a Mataco village the inhabitants know of no other remedy against the evil than to burn the whole village, to abandon the place and the sick ones, and to depart to another place. When an Indian is attacked by the small-pox, the Mataco told me, the *nahút* seizes the patient at the throat and presses it together with such violence that the tongue hangs out from the mouth, the eyes are thrust out from their orbits, the face swells up, and the patient dies.

If in a village, during a certain time, several deaths have occurred, especially if an epidemic has been raging, the Mataco are in the habit of saying: »That place has been visited by many *nahút yil*». On the other hand, if in a certain village there has been no death and no disease for a long time, the Indians say: »In this place there are, at present, no *nahút yil*». There is practically no disease and no illness which is not directly or indirectly ascribed by the Indians either to an *aittáh slamai* or a *nahút yil*. Slight disorders and illnesses which are cured in a couple of days are ascribed to the *aittáh*, mortal diseases to the *nahút*. If a Mataco for instance breaks his leg, or if some other misfortune happens to him which does not end fatally, he is of opinion that he has been attacked by a »small» *aittáh*. Similarly, there are *aittáh* operating in stupendous natural phenomena, in hurricanes, in torrential rains, in thunder and lightning,

[752] 776 821

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his soul is taken up to Paradise, *Piyám*, by his *peyák nótta*. Similarly, the medicine-men are believed to be able to make, with the aid of their guardian spirits, occasional journeys to *Piyám* even in their life-time. The Tobas address prayers to these spirits and even offerings are made to them.

The medicine-men of the *M a t a c o* also have a »good spirit» (*aittáh is*), of which much the same holds true as has been said of the »good spirits» of the Tobas and the Choroti. The *aittáh is* of the Mataco is however surnamed *aittáh talák*, *i.e.* »the Old One», and to that extent seems to be more strongly personified than the corresponding tutelary genius of the Tobas and the Choroti. The Old One of the Mataco is not a »Supreme Being» of the kind which is supposed to exist among certain primitive tribes; he is neither a creator of the world nor a guardian of morality. He is the particular guardian spirit of the medicine-men and plays his most important rôle in connection with the conjurations by means of which the latter try to cure disease. The Mataco ascribe disease to the operation of evil spirits. The cure, as usual, is effected by the expulsion of the evil intruder, but the medicine-man's own art is insufficient for that. He needs supernatural aid, and this aid is afforded him by the *aittáh talák*.

The goodness of the »Old One» however seems to be only relative; capriciousness is one of his properties. In some cases he helps and cures or relieves the patient; but in other cases he gives no relief however much he is invoked. The great question in a case of sickness is consequently: Is the Old One in a good temper and propitious or not? If the patient recovers through the treatment of the medicine-man, the Mataco say: *is aittáh talák*, »The Old One is good». On the other hand, if the patient dies, they say: »This time the Old One was not good».

It is hardly necessary to point out that the belief of the Chaco Indians in a »good spirit» is not due to Christian influence but is genuinely Indian. At the time when I visited the tribes of the Rio Pilcomayo they were very little affected by European civilization, both in their religion and in their general culture, and the savage Ashluslay, who also believe in a »good spirit», not at all. Besides, we know that the idea of individual guardian spirits, invoked by the medicine-men and assisting them in their operations, is by no means an exceptional phenomenon among the Chaco Indians, but is met with among many other Indian tribes also, both in South and in North America.

It has long been a current opinion among anthropologists that the

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Chapter XIV.

Religious rites and ceremonies.

As I have pointed out, magical conjurations play the most important part in the religious life of the Chaco Indians. These conjurations are of different kinds, according to the different occasions on which they take place, or the particular purposes for which they are performed. In some cases the Indians simply try to frighten the evil spirits away by shouting and making a noise with instruments of some kind; in other cases they try to render them harmless by coercing and compelling them. But the Indians also have recourse to magical conjurations with rattles, drums, dancing, etc. to influence good and beneficent spirits, for instance those animating certain trees and plants, or with a view to producing certain effects in nature or in the world of human beings merely on the principle of sympathetic magic. On the other hand, there is also a sort of worship, inasmuch as prayers are addressed to the individual guardian spirits in trouble and distress, and these prayers may, at least among the Tobas, be accompanied by offerings.

Those practices which may be referred to the category of »conjurations« apparently play the most important part. Being mostly performed by means of magical instruments of some kind, they are at any rate the most conspicuous. Prayers to a great extent escape observation and are kept more secret than other religious ceremonies.

1. Magical ceremonies to cure sickness.

We know already the general theory of disease held by the Chaco Indians. Most bodily evils from which the Indians suffer are, according to their belief, due to witchcraft, which implies that the illness has been sent by a human enemy, generally a malignant sorcerer. In this

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753 way the Indian has arrived at the theory of »possession»: an evil spirit has entered the body in the form of a material object of some kind. It is the medicine-man's business to extract the evil intruder, and if he succeeds in doing so, the patient will recover. An epidemic, on the other hand, especially such as has come to the Indians from another part of the country, is believed to be directly caused by special disease- and death-demons of a particularly malignant character, who wander about in the village carrying off one victim after the other. Against these demons even the art of the medicine-man is powerless. The only thing the panic-stricken Indians can do in such cases is to abandon the haunted village as soon as possible and wander off to another part of the country.

There is, to these Indians, practically no such thing as »natural» disease and death. Every illness is attributed to supernatural causes, be the diagnosis in a particular case witchcraft or disease.

Therefore, in dealing with native methods of curing illness we are here only concerned with such evils as are set down to witchcraft.

164 There are certain ailments which are particularly characteristic of
753 the Chaco Indians. Rheumatic pains, especially during the dry season, are very common, and both young and old people suffer from them. As we know, they usually come on very suddenly, and even civilized peoples still use expressions like »fairy-dart», »*Hexenschuss*», etc. of such sudden ailments. Beliefs of this kind are held both by the *Choroti*
753 and by the other Chaco Indians. The Indians have very concrete ideas as to the way in which the sorcerers and the demons who serve them operate. The mysterious pain suddenly afflicting a man is explained as due to an arrow shot by an evil spirit. The Choroti accordingly call this disease-demon *möhsek ihïtek*, i.e. »the arrow-shooting demon», and this is an idea which is quite common among the South American Indians in general. The expression seems to indicate that at least in some cases an evil spirit is supposed to operate alone. As a rule, however, he is sent by a human sorcerer. I have already mentioned that the »arrow» or »splinter», discharged by the sorcerer or his assistant demon, is generally a small stone, a cactus thorn, a piece of bone, or a small insect (for instance a worm or a beetle). I have also stated that this seemingly insignificant material object is identical with a mysterious demoniacal being whom the medicine-man, in curing the patient, tries to »extract» from his body. The object is sent by a *möhsek*, or in a certain sense *is* a *möhsek*. Generally, however, the Choroti call the mysterious intruder

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by another name: sometimes it is called *nihlêle*, in other cases again *pini*, words which have their equivalents in the Mataco and the Toba languages in the terms *aláh* and *kaipák* respectively. In regard to all these words we have to remember that they belong to the particular mystical terminology of the sorcerers and cannot exactly be translated into any civilized language. The Indian »arrow» or »splinter» is half an inanimate object, half a live being, half material, half spiritual, half natural, half supernatural. Whatever it is, it is to the primitive mind the most real thing possible, because its existence is manifested by its dreadful effects.

The Choroti Indian, who works evil against his fellow-tribesmen by throwing spells against them, is called a wizard (*ayïeu*). The expression for the nefarious operation itself is in the Choroti language *páhu ahuli sikiätsă*, (»to work evil against a fellow-man by means of witchcraft»). For the purpose of bewitching another Indian the sorcerer tries if possible to get hold of something that has been in close contact with the victim's body, for instance a single hair, a little saliva when he has spat on the ground, something of his excrement, a piece of his clothes, etc., and uses these things as vehicles for his curses. But even a medicine-man or curer, as we have seen, is called *ayïeu*, and there is thus no essential difference between an Indian practising black or nefarious magic and one practising white magic. A man in possession of a guardian spirit may use his art either for the benefit of his fellow-tribesmen or to harm them, according as to whether he regards them as his friends or as his foes.

Besides rheumatism, affections of the throat and the chest, arising from chill, are very common among the Chaco Indians during the dry season. The Indian explanation invariably is that an evil spirit has entered into that particular part of the body where the pain is felt. If a Choroti Indian suffers from head-ache and I ask him what is the matter with him, he will answer that he has a *möhsek* in the head; if he suffers from a catarrh, he will point to his throat or his chest and say that a *möhsek* has taken its seat in either of these parts of the body. In a village I once met an old woman who had her right fore-arm paralyzed, evidently in consequence of a fit of apoplexy. She explained to me that the arm had been seized by an evil *möhsek*, and had tied a dirty woollen band round the arm at the wrist so as to prevent the evil spirit from penetrating further into the body.

If the demon is allowed to complete his work of destruction in the

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Choroti SK6

in the conjurations of the Toba medicine-men, as we shall presently find. C 755

These conjurations are varied with other manipulations, above all with blowing, spitting, and rubbing the bad spot. Massage regularly forms part of the treatment applied by the Chaco medicine-men, and is the only action which may really have relieving effects. — Ultimately the doctor again leans over the patient and starts to suck vigorously the bad spot. He turns away, spits and hawks up and behaves as if he were going to vomit. Thereupon he takes something from his mouth and, turning to the bystanders, shows it to them: it is the arrow, consisting of a pebble, a piece of bone, etc. which he pretends to have extracted from the patient's body. The latter should now recover; but it may be that there are several of them in his body, or that a new arrow is sent into it which he will feel on the following night. Generally therefore the treatment must be continued for several evenings.

The Choroti medicine-men also invoke their guardian spirits (*mōhsek eis*), and if they succeed in extracting the arrow, this is said to be ultimately due to the assistance of their good spirits. The invocation of the »good spirit» in connection with the treatment of sickness is however a form of worship that I have studied much better among the Mataco and the Tobas. C 755 776

The *M a t a c o* have exactly the same theory as to the nature of bodily disorders as the Choroti, ascribing curable »sickness» to possession by an *aitták sláhsa* (a »little» *aitták* or demon) and mortal epidemic disease to a *nahút*. The ultimate cause of sickness is witchcraft. To extract the »arrow» or splinter (*aláh*) discharged by the demon or his human controller is the ultimate aim of the medicine-man. But he cannot do it with his own powers, he needs the aid of his »good spirit», the *aitták talák*. If the good spirit does not come down to his assistance, the patient is bound to die. The invocation of the good spirit, or the prayer, is therefore the last and decisive action of the medicine-man's treatment of the sick person. M 753 755 776

Whereas the Choroti medicine-man does not generally use any magical instrument when he treats a patient, the particular instrument of the Mataco doctor is a sort of rattle, called *tahús*, consisting of a number of pieces of tin arranged round a circular piece of leather. When the instrument is shaken it produces a dull sound which is believed to inspire the spirits with fear. At certain other conjurations it is worn by the medicine-man like a cincture round the loins.

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He can be near the Pilcomayo[1] or in the bush without losing his way.

To meet a *welán* means death. Only the medicine-men are allowed to speak to them without danger. If a person is stolen by a *welán* he will become a medicine-man for he understands the ways and the language of the *welán*. The *welán* appear only at night. In order to ask them questions it is necessary to apply to a medicine-man who knows their language. The medicine-man enters a *yuchan* tree, the *welán* blows on him and the medicine-man in turn blows upon the people. By night the *welán* come to visit the medicine-men.

When a *welán* takes a person away that person can no longer speak and does not wish to remain at home any longer. He must be sung over for a month, at the end of which time he becomes a medicine-man.

55. Origin of Disease

A man was caught by a *welán* who made him a chief *welán*. The man who had become a *welán* changed his mother into one also. One day a man died and the people charged the *welán*-man with his death. They invited the *welán* to visit them under the pretence of presenting him with a sheep. The man accepted the invitation but before going he told his mother he would probably not return again. He went to the others who were glad to have him accept their invitation. They gave him a sheep, asking him to eat it immediately, but the *welán* refused and said that he would like to eat it upon reaching his home. So he went taking the animal with him. The men who had planned to kill him ran ahead and hid themselves on the path he was following. When they heard the bleating of the sheep they shot at him and the *welán*-man was mortally wounded. Feeling how deep the point of the arrow had penetrated he

[1] The big swamps formed by the Pilcomayo are real labyrinths in which one may become lost.

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told his murderers that they had killed him, but that he would revenge himself by killing them too. He took some of the blood which ran from his wound and threw it at them. The blood changed into disease and from that day on men have been killed by disease. Before that time disease did not exist. (XIII).

56. The Welán-Woman (Pedro)[1]

A woman was heard crying one night and when the men asked her what the trouble was she said that they had killed her son and that she was going to eat their sons. At midnight she left her house and caught and ate a child. She did this many times. When the parents of the children kept awake to protect them the *welán*-woman made herself invisible. Finally they could stand it no longer and decided to kill the woman. They killed her but because she was a *welán* she came to life again and went right on killing and eating children. The men realized she could not be killed permanently so they decided to look for another shelter. They hollowed out a *yuchan* and entered it but it was very hot and they were obliged to leave. They slept in the open and the woman ate many children. From there the *welán*-woman proceeded to another village, Pozo del Tigre, and started eating children there. The men of Pozo del Tigre proved more astute. They killed the *welán*-woman and then they started a big fire and burned her. When she was in the fire the embers craeked up and jumped in all directions. Those which fell in the forest changed into jaguars domestic cats, pumas, tapirs and snakes. Those which fell into the water became rayfish, *surubi*, *piranya*, *bagres*, *pacu* and other water animals.

57. The Spirits (Pedro)

The spirits, that haunt the imagination of the Matako, are called *hoʔnat-Lele* (dwellers of the ground) or [illegible]*i-Lele*

[1] This tale is the sequel of the preceding.

(inhabitants of the night). In Pedro's pronunciation the word for ghost was *na-Lele*.

When a spirit enters a body the person must sing, otherwise the spirit will never leave his victim, he will make him feel hot and cold alternately. All medicine-men have experienced these changes and the white men call malaria the disease caused by the presence of a spirit in a person's body.

Near Las Lomitas there is a dog spirit. His hair is like the hair of a sheep, his eyes like those of an owl only very sunken. He is as tall as a calf. He sometimes comes by night to the bush near Las Lomitas and catches women whom he makes sick. It is difficult to see him because when he has no intention to do harm he runs away when people approach him, as do the *ho?nat-Lele*.

There exists a species of spirits called *ihiǫL* which look like owls. One by the name of *Tapitax* invented pottery. Sometimes pots are found which belong to him. They are large and are buried in the earth up to the brim.

The *ho?nat-Lele* are bad spirits. They have the appearance of men, only they are lean and dark. They live in *yuchan* trees and roam about during the summer months, in winter they go underground. They make their presence known by singing and whistling. They make mead from honey and *algarroba* husks. They pile together the fibers of the husks.

58. The Man among the Spirits (Pedro)

A man was caught by the *ho?nat-Lele*. He remained with them for more than a year. When he returned he found himself in the middle of fields. He married a woman-spirit and lived the life of the spirits. Once he went with his wife to fetch honey out of a tree, which according to his wife, was full of it. It was midnight and as the man could not see, his wife pulled his eyelashes out and gave him hers so that he could see in the darkness. To dig out the honey the woman-spirit used an iron implement like a cutlass. She

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XIII. The Diseases

753 776 755 The diseases are demons which have the appearence of men but are invisible. They wear feathers like medicine-men. Smallpox for instance is especially ugly. His head is swollen and full of small holes. He lives not for from Salta, in a cave on a big mountain. The demons of disease live under the ground or within the *yuchanes*. They leave their shelter to enter men and make them sick. In order to get them out of the bodies of sick people one must ask them what they want, for the demons always want something. One has to say, »What do you want?» The demon answers, »Food, dresses, a gun.» All these things are to be given him. But they are equally satisfied with only the sight of these things and men may very well eat the food or make use of the things whose essence the demons have received. It would be very dangerous to eat of a dish before the demon has helped himself. Men dance in order to scare a demon or chase him away. The demon is obliged to participate in the dancing and gets tired. When those who take part in a treatment have danced for a while, the magician speaks to the disease. The disease asks whether they are angry with him. The medicine-man answers, »No, we are dancing as usual.» The disease then says, »Then let us not dance any longer, for I am to dance to-morrow too.»

753 774 Each thing has its *husék* (spirit) or image and it is this image which the disease requires after he has stolen or entered the soul of the man and it is this soul which the medicine-man has gone to get. During the first part of all medical ceremonies, the medicine-man's spirit goes to the disease and asks him which things he wants in return for the sick man's soul.

[124] One of the reasons why the Matako always require payment to let themselves be photographed is that by photographing them one takes their image (spirit) and thus may hurt them. The money they get for the photograph may eventually

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serve to pay the medicine-man in case something happens to them.

The ceremonial objects whose spirit the disease takes away do not become any weaker, since they may be used directly afterwards.

Even though the disease has been given food, he remains insatiable and wants more. He also wants to take away the things he is offered, that is the reason why the medicine-man is obliged to blow on the objects lest the disease should stick to them. When the disease does not get what he wants, he becomes angry and kills his victim.

The disease, or a bad spirit, introduces into the body of the sick person small sticks, usually objects which will make him feel pain. The medicine-man has to take them away by sucking the aching parts and he blows the patient to get the sicknes out of his body. Before treating a patient a medicine-man adorns himself with feathers in order to look like disease or the demon who caused it. The diseases and the spirits are very fond of these ornaments and enjoy seeing them on those who cure the patient.

When the malady is not very serious, the patient is treated within his hut for economical reasons. To determine whether or not the patient is to be decorated depends upon the seriousness of his case. The medicine-man and the patient get under the same blanket and the former speaks to the disease. Thus the audience is not too large and the disease is easier to cope with. Sometimes it is satisfied with a quart of alcohol. A sick child is always cured inside the house, except when there is an organized ceremony through which they can profit toward the end.

According to the Indians vaccine exerts a powerful action against the disease and he can no longer attack the individuals thus vaccinated. Shots fired at the end of the ceremony puts the disease to flight and prevents him from desiring the gun with which one assistant danced. To keep away sickness it is good to hang the carapace of a *tatu*

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755 [114] In the course of the mission to the Argentinian Chaco of which I was in charge during 1932-1933, I had the opportunity of being present at a certain number of ceremonies for the expulsion of illnesses, or evil spirits.

[753] [774] The Matako /Mataco/ Indians do not seem to be acquainted with any other medicine than magical medicine; that is normal since the illness takes the image of the sick person and not his body.

Among the ceremonies described below, a distinction can be made between those from which the whole village benefits and those from which only a single sick person benefits.

Ceremony for the Expulsion of Illnesses for All the Village

(April 8, 1933).

755 756 783 796 [534] [292] [237] [302] This ceremony took place in the morning in the open air rather far from the houses, and was carried out by all the medicine men /the English term is used/ of the village. They were arranged in a row facing east, and all had a maraca and a bone whistle in their hands. Some of them were carrying bands of rattles, either in the hand, slung over the shoulder, or hooked over the elbows. Some officiants were dressed in red wool ceremonial shirts spangled with rings of shells, and others in war shirts made of caraguata thread. Almost all were wearing red headbands decorated with feathers or hats adorned with ostrich feathers, and most had a bunch of ostrich feathers in the hand. The faces of the principal medicine men were daubed with red and black, and those of the women with red. Facing the row of officiants were planted several arrows, points down, and a lance with the point up. In the course of the ceremony a bunch of ostrich feathers was attached to the top of the lance. When I arrived at the spot, I noticed a young /212/ man crushing ha'tax seeds in a gourd which the medicine men would take later.

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Notes

753 755 843 1. This woman, who was about seven months pregnant, continued to carry enormous loads of dry wood, which provoked the illness to which she succumbed.

[761] 2. According to the opinion of the village, the death was due to the fact that she had become pregnant before her first child knew how to feed itself.